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Letter dated 8 January 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government and with reference to document A/56/758-S/2001/1262 of 27 December 2001, I have the honour to state the following:

The content of the letter by the representative of Israel is a poor form of propaganda against the Islamic Republic of Iran: taking phrases and statements from the Friday Prayer sermon by Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani on 14 December 2001 out of context, forging and paraphrasing them to fit their ill intentions and presenting them as a threat. The letter clearly shows the extent to which the Israeli officials are prepared to engage in outright deceit, forgery and trickery to achieve their unholy and illegitimate objectives; this time the subject was Iran. This was exactly the point, which Ayatollah Rafsanjani made in his sermon, that for over 50 years Zionism, with colonialists' support, engaged in conspiracy, deceit, forgery and trickery, followed by blatant and persistent violence against the Palestinian people.

In his sermon on 14 December, the "Ghods Day", Ayatollah Rafsanjani presented his historical analysis of the Palestinian experience, Zionist oppression and the possible consequences of a policy of double standard and ensuring an imbalance of power in the Middle East. He implored the West to revise its policy for the sake of peace, justice and stability in the world; for otherwise, he underlined rhetorically, the international community may be on a destructive path leading to World War III, "and this would be the ultimate worst thing that could take place".

His critique of the West also included the fact that by helping Israel to acquire every conceivable weapon of mass destruction, the West is not serious about the imperative of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. He made a strong case for the imperative of a non-discriminatory approach to issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, which should bring Israel into the fold of those who abide by international legal instruments on non-proliferation.

In order to promote a genuine rethinking about international security by supporters of Israel, Ayatollah Rafsanjani presented what he called a "rationally probable" scenario: something which "we (Iran) cannot encourage", but may be the "natural trend of things", in the following terms: "if, one day — and this is extremely important — the Islamic world would, in turn, arm itself with what Israel has today, then the strategy of arrogance will hit a dead end, since the use of a single atom bomb in Israel would leave nothing, while in the Islamic world it would only cause damage, and this is not far from a rational probability ..., but a course of action we cannot encourage. I am talking of a natural trend of things." He then goes on to say that "Iran hopes that the world would not fall into such chaos and instability, which has already cost the international community more than $1,000 billion".

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Comparing this statement with the chapeau of the Israeli letter, where it says that "the Islamic world is arming itself with nuclear weapons in order to destroy Israel and undermine Western interests in the region", and the rest of the letter clearly demonstrates the trickery, deceit and demagoguery of the Israeli regime. This would also reveal the poor propaganda by the Israeli regime to deflect international attention from its acts of State terrorism against the Palestinian people to frivolous and engineered issues.

The practice and position of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its officials, including Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani, in rejecting weapons of mass destruction are well known. The most recent statement of Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani on the subject, dated 6 January 2002, where he reiterates this position in most unequivocal terms, is only the latest example of this longstanding and universally known position.

As a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, the Islamic Republic of Iran, unlike Israel, has committed itself fully to respect the provisions and implement the obligations in these international treaties. More importantly, the Islamic Republic of Iran has a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, which covers peaceful nuclear activities and programmes, including the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran.

As United Nations documents testify, for about three decades Iran has been one of the main sponsors of the proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Islamic Republic of Iran as well as other States of the region firmly believe that the Israeli clandestine, non-transparent and unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and programmes on weapons of mass destruction constitute a formidable source of threat, instability, tensions and lack of confidence in the Middle East.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly supports the proposal for the establishment of the Middle East as a zone free from weapons of mass destruction. We also believe that universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention as well as the effective implementation of the Resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons would undoubtedly strengthen international peace and security and contribute to the realization of a world free from weapons of mass destruction as an ultimate goal.

The letter by Israel is therefore a pure fabrication designed to defuse the international outrage against it as well as deflect attention abroad. I wish to underline that such propagandist attempts, if continued, may find a life of their own with adverse consequences for the peace and stability of the region, for which Israel will be solely responsible.

I should be grateful if the present letter would be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Hadi **Nejad-Hosseinian**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative